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U.S. Interstate Commerce Commission

Outline of plan for bringing land valuations to...

Washington

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OUTLINE OF PLAN

FOR

BRINGING LAND VALUATIONS TO DECEMBER 31, 1927

AND SUCH OTHER DATE OR DATES

AS MAY BE FIXED BY

THE DIRECTOR OF VALUATION

LAND SECTION

BUREAU OF VALUATION

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

UNITED STATES

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON

1928

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OUTLINE OF PLAN FOR BRINGING LAND VALUATIONS TO DECEMBER 31, 1927, AND SUCH OTHER DATE OR DATES AS MAY BE FIXED BY THE DIRECTOR OF VALUATION

1. DETERMINATION AND ELIMINATION OF PROPERTIES WHICH WILL NOT REQUIRE REAPPRAISAL

There are many properties or parts of properties which may be considered of minor significance in the accumulation of the total value of lands used by the carriers of the country. There are many other properties or parts of properties as to which no substantial changes in value have taken place and it is proposed that the original findings as to the values of these properties shall be allowed substantially to stand. In case there have been changes in area in such properties the necessary modifications can be made in computations and the original unit values can be applied to the new areas.

Carriers are called upon to indicate the portions of their properties in which they feel that such relatively insignificant changes have taken place that complete reappraisals are not justified. It will, of course, be necessary for the land section to give sufficient study to these indications to be assured of the propriety and adequacy of the carriers' suggestions. This study will take particular note of instances in which there may have been decreases from the values set in the original valuations. If, after the necessary investigation, it appears that the carriers' suggestions as so modified are reasonable, written agreements between the carriers and the land section will be arranged.

It is anticipated that the greater portions of rural rights of way in general can be disposed of in a comparatively short time and there are many instances where urban rights of way may be eliminated from reappraisal.

2. MAPS

Any plan for bringing land valuations to date must depend upon the preparation and furnishing of current maps by carriers. Except in those cases in which there have been no significant changes in the carriers' holdings or in the nature and use of the immediately adjoining property, maps prepared for the primary valuation work

will not correctly portray the properties as of the later date. The prints furnished for the original valuation have, of course, been used in the collection of a great mass of information in the way of sales, assessments, and opinion data relating to the valuation as of the original dates and it would lead to endless confusion and difficulty to attempt the accumulation on the same prints of data relating to valuations as of the later date. It is therefore clear that there should be required substantial compliance with orders Nos. 1, 5, 6, and 23, relating to maps, which provide that carriers shall keep available reproductions of the maps prepared for the original valuation work and keep them current by posting on them changes in property after the date of valuation, prints to be furnished to the bureau whenever requested. The elimination of properties from reappraisal as contemplated by paragraph 1 above will materially reduce the number of maps that the carriers will be required to furnish under the map orders.

3. CARRIERS' COOPERATION IN THE ACCUMULATION OF SALES DATA

Carriers under appraisal shall collect and prepare lists, in duplicate, of all sales within designated limits applicable to lands as to which substantial changes in value are thought to have taken place. The use of tract indices or abstract records whenever available will be encouraged in order that complete sales data may be supplied. Copies of these lists are to be furnished to the land section and its forces will be assigned to make checks of the information supplied in order to determine its completeness and accuracy.

4. JOINT VERIFICATION OF SALES DATA

Sales data thus supplied to the land section by the carriers will be carefully verified, representatives of the carrier and the land section participating in this verification and agreeing upon the record data, although not necessarily upon the applicability of the data to the properties under appraisal. To put the matter in another way, agreements will be reached as to matters of fact and record while the conclusions to be drawn from the facts recorded will be independently reached. On the part of the land section's representatives there should be careful investigation of possible sources of additional information as well as close scrutiny of the correctness of that already furnished.

5. AGREEMENT AS TO ZONING

Representatives of both the carriers and the land section will participate in the establishment of tentative zone limits. As in

the past it will be understood that such tentative limits are subject to modification as the work progresses and each party will be expected to keep the other advised of any modifications found necessary or desirable. Generally speaking, it is contemplated that the zone lines of the original appraisals should be adopted as has been done in recapture appraisals, changes in value or utility affecting parts of the original zones to be taken care of by subzoning.

6. INDEPENDENT FIXING OF UNITS OF VALUE

As has been indicated above the application of the data collected and the fixing of unit values derived therefrom should be matters of independent action by the land section and the carriers concerned. While it is not to be expected that the carriers' units fixed thus independently will be even substantially the same as those of the land section it is confidently expected that the agreements to the basic data, contemplated under paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 above, will serve to obviate the necessity for such extended discussions with the carriers over controverted points as were had in the original valuation. These agreements will also obviate the necessity of repeated field investigations such as have resulted from apparently conflicting data gathered in the course of the primary valuation work.

7. AGREEMENTS AS TO AREA, CLASSIFICATION, ETC.

It is proposed to continue the present plan of disposing of questions of computations of area, classification of land as carrier or noncarrier, etc., by means of conferences (or, in the case of small carriers, by correspondence) with a view of reaching full agreement on all such matters of fact.

8. ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL HEADQUARTERS

Both expedition and uniformity of results will be served if the same group of men can be retained to appraise all properties within a given territory. Local headquarters will be established at well-defined railway centers throughout the country, with assignment of appraisers to complete appraisals of the lands of all carriers in their territory. Experienced appraisers will be designated to take charge of parties at these points, subject to direction from and reporting to the Washington headquarters.

9. OTHER VALUATION ORDERS

Provision has been made in subschedules under supplements to order No. 3 for details of the acquisition of land parcels, similar to

those supplied by returns to order No. 7, necessary to the work of the land section.

Some modification of the requirements of order No. 15 may be necessary in order to classify lands leased to private parties in accordance with recent instructions within the bureau. Consideration should, however, be given to pending proposals as to the revision of the commission's accounting requirements in accordance with which rents received by carriers for incidental private or semiprivate use of their property will be classified as operating revenues, presumably with approval of a carrier classification for many items of property now set up as noncarrier. Such a change in the prescribed accounting procedure would apparently affect the whole basis of the instructions now regarded as governing and would, in great measure at least, obviate the need of returns to order No. 15.

The land section's connection with the carrying out of order No. 16 is more or less mechanical, its function being merely to compute the area and value of parcels classified as aids or apparent aids by the accounting section.

10. COORDINATION WITH RECAPTURE WORK

It is desirable that any program of bringing valuations to date should be closely tied in with recapture procedure; that is, the land section will, concurrently with the work of bringing valuations to date, make the necessary appraisals for prospective recapture cases.

Approved:

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION, DIVISION 1,
June 12, 1928.

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